



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | POSITION 9

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT M. LORENA GONZÁLEZ**

January 26, 2021

**Subject: House Bill 1267**

Dear Chair Goodman and members of the Public Safety Committee:

I write to you today in my role as Seattle City Council President and on behalf of my constituents, who care deeply about the ability to hold police officers accountable for potential criminal conduct arising from use of force violations. As a civil rights attorney representing victims of police misconduct for ten years prior to being elected to Council, and as the former Public Safety Chair for the Seattle City Council and current Vice-Chair, I write to underscore my strong support for [House Bill \(H.B.\) 1267](#).

This Governor-requested legislation will serve to establish an effective, independent investigation of “...potential criminal conduct arising from police use of force, including custodial injuries, and other officer-involved incidents”.

*From the bill:*

**The legislature finds that there has been an outpouring of frustration, anger, and demand for change from many members of the public over the deaths of people of color resulting from encounters with police. The most recent deaths in the United States and within Washington are a call to lead our state to a new system for investigating deaths and other serious incidents involving law enforcement officers.**

Similar to the efforts of the City of Seattle to establish the independent Office of Inspector General for Public Safety and further empower the Office of Police Accountability (OPA) via the 2017 Police Accountability Ordinance, which I sponsored, HB 1267 will create an Office of Independent Investigations for the explicit intent to “...conduct investigations of use of force and other cases under its jurisdiction in a manner that is competent, unbiased, and thorough.” The O.I.I. will be independent of influence from law enforcement departments, effectively reducing bias and increasing accountability and transparency in their investigations. The passage of HB 1267 will undoubtedly improve police accountability statewide and public trust in law enforcement statewide.

There has never been a time more important than this chapter in our nation’s history to provide ongoing fidelity to police reform and systemic oversight of the management,

practices, and policies of *all* police departments. HB 1267 will create meaningful accountability measures that contribute to the building of trust between police and community, and it is critical that we achieve these lasting reforms.

Thank you to the members of this committee for recognizing the magnitude and importance of this legislation. I strongly encourage this committee's support for HB 1267.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lorena Gonzalez', with a stylized, cursive script.

M. Lorena Gonzalez, Position 9  
Council President  
Seattle City Council

CC: Governor Jay Inslee  
Sonja Hallum, Office of Governor Jay Inslee  
Representative Jesse Johnson, Vice Chair Public Safety Committee  
Representative Gina Mosbrucker, Ranking Minority Member Public Safety Committee  
Representative Brad Klippert, Assistant Ranking Minority Member  
Representative Lauren Davis  
Representative Jenny Graham  
Representative Dan Griffey  
Representative David Hackney  
Representative John Lovick  
Representative Tina Orwall  
Representative Bill Ramos  
Representative Tarra Simmons  
Representative Jesse Young